

III. In the Specification (Clean Sheet):

(Page 1, line 1)

Field of the Invention

A2
The present invention is concerned with a vaccine for the protection of poultry caused by an avian pathogen comprising an attenuated infectious laryngotracheitis virus (ILTV) mutant and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent, a cell culture infected with an attenuated ILTV mutant as well as a process for the preparation of such a vaccine.

(Page 1, line 7)

Background of the Invention

A3
Infectious laryngotracheitis (ILT) is a respiratory disease that mainly affects chickens, but pheasants and peacocks can also be infected. In the acute phase of the disease, from 2 to 8 days post-infection, signs of respiratory distress accompanied by gasping and expectoration of bloody exudate is are observed. In addition, the mucous membranes of the trachea become swollen and hemorrhagic. This epizootic form of the disease spreads rapidly and can affect up to 100% of an infected flock. Mortality can range from 10 to 80% of the flock. Milder forms of the disease are characterized by watery eyes, conjunctivitis, persistent nasal discharge and a reduction in egg production. Also weight loss, drop in egg production and increased sensitivity to secondary infection are major causes of economic losses. In the absence of the acute signs of the disease laboratory confirmation must be obtained. Virus can be readily isolated from tracheal or lung tissue and the demonstration of intranuclear inclusion bodies in tracheal or conjunctival tissue

Q3
cont. is diagnostic in infectious laryngotracheitis virus. In addition, rapid identification can be made with the use of fluorescent antibodies.

(Page 3, line 19)

Summary of the Invention

Q4 It is an object of the present invention to provide a vaccine that comprises an ILTV vaccine strain that is attenuated in a controlled way by means of genetic engineering techniques that prevent a reversion to virulence of the attenuated vaccine strain, and that is able to induce a protective immune response in a host animal infected with the vaccine strain.

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Detailed Description

Q5 The inventors have found that, in contrast to the UL[-1] gene, the ILTV-specific UL0 gene is not only non-essential for ILTV infection or replication in cells but that, in addition, the inactivation of the expression of the native UL0 protein by means of controlled genetic engineering of the UL0 gene results in an ILTV mutant that is attenuated when compared to wild-type parent ILTV. Furthermore, it is found that this attenuated ILTV mutant is able to induce a protective immune response that reduces mortality and clinical signs in vaccinated animals upon challenge with virulent ILTV. In addition, the vaccine according to the present invention displays a further advantage in that it can be administered safely to chickens via spray mass-vaccination.

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Brief Description of the Figures

Figure 1

Ab Genomic map of ILTV genome and construction of the transfer plasmids. The relevant restriction sites for generation of the transfer plasmids, the heterologous sequences, promoters and poly-A signals are indicated. ILTV recombinants (names in bold italics) could be isolated after cotransfection of cells with transfer plasmids and virion-DNA.

IV. In the Specification (Marked Version):

Please insert "Field of the Invention", as a new line, at line 1, page 1.

Please insert "Background of the Invention", as a new line, at line 6 of page 1.

Please insert "Summary of the Invention", as a new line, at line 19 of page 3.

Please insert "Detailed Description", as a new line, at line 32 of page 3.

Please delete "Legends to the figures" at line 1 of page 12.

Please insert "Brief Description of the Figures", as a new line, at line 1 of page 12.